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THE
MIDNIGHT CRY;
OR
SIGNS IN THE CHURCH

OF THE
BRIDEGROOM'S SECOND COMING:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
A SERMON,

PREACHED AT
GRANTHAM, IN LINCOLNSHIRE,

On June 18, 1800.

BY J. LOWES, K

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, GRANTHAM.

Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy
to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before
the Son of man.

LUKE, xxi. 36.

CARLISLE:

PRINTED (FOR THE AUTHOR) BY F. JOLLIE.

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1800.



DEDICATION.

TO THE CHURCH OF GOD,

AT GRANTHAM.

DEAR FRIENDS,

AT your request I have written out the following discourse for to be published; and as you heard it as the word of God, and I received it from his own mouth by his Spirit, and had the witness and power of the Holy Ghost in preaching it, testifying of it as his truth; and the same Spirit of illumination bringing the greatest part of it to my remembrance, with the sweetest harmony, when writing, enabling me to transcribe it upon paper, from the "living epistle" on the mind; I have not the least doubt but that it is God's own word; and what confirms it, is, the repeated renewals, and fresh manifestations of the same matchless light which then began to dawn, and has shone brighter and brighter ever since, and is such as eclipses all the light we ever had before, and makes it gross darkness, and is attended with such rays of glory as makes the old dispensation "have no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth;" and it brings

such a life as is above all death, and swallows up our former life in death; and this of course brings a liberty, which is eternity itself; and brings mortality, with all its liberty and freedom, into perpetual bondage, captivity, and slavery. And it reveals such a perfect righteousness and justification, as turns all the righteousness we ever knew before into sin against the Spirit; which proves that the promise is fulfilled, and the Spirit is come "to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." *Of sin*, in that we have been living all our life-time in the righteousness of the law, and have been cleaving to it, thinking it to be the proper righteousness of the Son, which is the sin of unbelief against him. *Of righteousness*, because the Son is gone to the bosom of the Father, and the Father is come to dwell in him, and both dwell in the Spirit with us, as "the Lord our righteousness." *Of judgment*, because the prince of this world, or the infernal head of the wicked, with his whole mystical body, are judged to be in the law, and the law itself is judged by the coming of the Holy Ghost, in the pure gospel from heaven, which contains grace, mercy, and remission of sins; and these are a new law, which sets itself vehemently against the old law, and the old law of works sets itself vehemently against the new law of grace; and these are like two mighty potentates, with their armies meeting together; works
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fight against grace, and claim the victory, the crown, and inheritance, from their light, their life, their diligence, and activity; but grace fights against works, and claims the victory, crown, and eternal blessing, by its brightness, flashing in the face of its enemies, proving them to be "works of darkness," combined under the banner of "the ruler of the darkness of this world." Then, by its pure breath, it consumes their goodness into sin; as it is written, "which shall be consumed with the breath of the Lord, and brightness of his coming," which brightness marshals the Devil, with all his works, inventions, and armies, in the flesh, upon the cross, and in the open vision of true divinity in the Spirit, "makes an open shew of these principalities and powers" in the flesh. And then, by the piercing life and light of the first, all the second, with the Devil at their head, fall, like lightning from heaven, and are judged as infernal rebels to the King of kings; and as this is now done, "now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out" from the temple of God, where he sat in his long, white garment, as God. But the Holy Ghost, by his coming, has not only cast him out, but has led us back to see the strong holds he has had us in, and also has led us to see the way God has been leading us through the wilderness, and what all our tribulation there was for, viz. to bring iniquity

iniquity to light, " and to let us know what was in our hearts." He has led us also to see all the way he has led us through the Red Sea of flesh, blood, and sin; through the great depths of original corruption, where there was no way of man's devising. And he has gone back with us, as far as Egypt, from the first coming of Moses to preach there, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, " when the Spirit, the Comforter is come, he shall lead you into all truth, and bring all things to your remembrance which I have said unto you;" and though these things which he has brought to our remembrance were all written in the Scripture, yet we could not possibly understand them, because we were alive in our own wisdom and learning, and striving to comprehend spiritual matters with a carnal judgment, which was like a man endeavouring to describe the brightness of the sun by the twinkling light of a wax taper; but no man knows the things of the Spirit; "but the Spirit" himself being come, "searches all things, even the deep things of God;" how much more the deep things of man, such as his deep apostacy from God, even when he thinks that he has sweet fellowship and communion with him; his deep hypocrisy, even when he is confident that he is sincere and upright; his deep wickedness, even when he is sure of being justified and made righteous; and his deep security in the law of Moses, whilst

whilst he is perfectly satisfied that it is the grace of Christ; because no man knows the law of Moses in any other manner than as a killing letter and condemning commandment, working death, wrath, guilt, and hell in the conscience: they know not that it gives life, love, a conditional pardon of sin, and brings a temporary heaven into the flesh. But the Scripture is as full in describing the sacrifices and atonements used under the law, as those used under the gospel, with the old temple, or heaven, where the first are offered; as well as the new temple, or heaven, containing the second. Then, as all men are naturally born in the first temple, with their consciences in bondage to the wrath, fear, terror, guilt, and death of the law, they there, in the old tabernacle, "offer services in the oldness of the letter" all their life time, until the atonement comes; and, of necessity, the atonement of the law must come first, to purge the conscience from its guilt and actual sin, before the atonement of the gospel can come, to purge the spirit from all sin; the first takes away terror, wrath, fear, torment, and dread of damnation, purges the conscience from all guiltiness, and purifies the flesh to make it holy, as Paul speaketh concerning it, "if the blood of bulls and of goats," which was used, and is still used under the law, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ," which is
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the second atonement, "purge the conscience," not from guilt, for that is already done, but "from dead works," and purify the spirit from the flesh, with all its sanctity and holiness. Now the first, or atonement of the law, can never take away sin, though it can take away guilt, because its tendency is to make the flesh, which is the real sin, holy, happy, humble, meek, and contrite, until it soon becomes a "varnished sepulchre," all fair and beautiful in holiness. But the second, or atonement of the gospel, which comes in the Spirit, cleanses it from all sin, by crucifying the flesh, with all its humility, meekness, contrition, joy, gratitude, and affections, as the most abominable objects. Yet, when the first atonement comes, it makes, as it were, a very heaven upon earth, as I myself found, when the Redeemer, as I thought, first appeared crucified upon the cross before my eyes, but they were only the eyes of nature; nevertheless, the sight removed the whole load of guilt, terror, judgment, death, and hell from my conscience, and filled my heart with such compunction for my former life and sin, which appeared to be the things that crucified the Son of God, and filled my heart with such contrition, self-abasement, and holy shame, that I was abashed to look him in the face; at the same time, such unutterable light, love, liberty, and raptures of joy, as scarce any heart could contain more, which vented itself in prayer and praise perpetually

ally before the Lord; and in reading, meditation, private prayer, and praise, I enjoyed a real heaven of pleasure; and if God had left me in it I would never have sought a better heaven, though it was only the old temple, and its happiness consisting of its carnal washings and purifications of the flesh. And if a man goes no farther than this, he is as sure to be damned at last as ever he was born; and yet he is as sure to himself that he is drinking and bathing in the pure river of eternal love, as if he was past the utmost verge of mortality, where all doubts are swallowed up; whereas, alas! he is drinking, and bathing in nothing else, save the spiritual wine of Babylon's fornication, which is most sweet and delicious to all flesh. He is confident of being in the very embraces and arms of the Divinity; whereas it is the embraces and arms of Satan, transformed into an angel of light, because that is his chief dress; and as he is not by the soul discovered, he has it as fast in his service as ever he had the Pope of Rome. And though it thinks that the everlasting gates are open, and it has reached the celestial heights, and is at perfect liberty to enter the mansion of glory, yet it is in the very depths of hell, a bond slave and wretched criminal, held by the unseen chains of Satan's lie and delusion in the law, saying, "Ye shall not surely die, but ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Though God says, If you taste of that tree, or

take any of its fruits, which grow up in the flesh, from the righteousness and works of the law, "ye shall surely die," yet this eating and feasting on the forbidden fruit is the great gospel liberty which is boasted of throughout the world; and this disobeying God's real command, and serving the Devil in a transformed likeness, is the christ that is worshipped; but as he is a carnal christ set up in the sensual mind of the flesh; he is, by scripture-inspiration, termed a beast, "and the dragon gives him his seat, and great authority; and all the world wondered after the beast, and all the world worshipped him, saying, Who is like unto the beast, who can judge him, or make war with him?" None on earth, or in the law, can make war with him, because by it he rules, and has the absolute dominion over the earth; none there can judge him, because, by the conditional promises and threatnings of the law, he judges all men; "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." But here is the comfort of the saints; as many as overcome the law overcome him, with all his infernal hypocrisy and wickedness, the world, the flesh, with all the sin, death, and misery contained in them: and this is the victory over the world, which includes all, "even our faith;" which enters into a certain new world in the spirit, where there are no conditions, qualifications, sin, or carnal commandments; but grace, mercy, peace, and good-will, harmony,

harmony, happiness, freedom from all sin, endless rest, endless light, and the "power of an endless life." Faith entering and taking possession of these becomes the power of God, which gets the conquest and victory over the old world, and all within it. But faith holds a new earth in the new world, producing new fruits of faith, hope, love, &c.; which overcome the old fruits of the old earth, by setting faith against faith, hope against hope, and love against love. Then that which is old becomes weak, is shaken, and vanishes away; that the other, which is new, and cannot be shaken, may remain: and as it contains a new heaven, as well as a new earth, with sparkling luminaries, fulfilling their courses; an everlasting Sun of Righteousness, that shines upon the moon, or new birth, attended with the stars of light, and wisdom of the Spirit; these overcome the old heaven, by placing one sun of righteousness against the other, until it is "turned into darkness;" one moon, or the new birth of the Spirit against the old birth of the flesh, until it is "turned into blood;" one set of stars against another, until the glory of the new heavens eclipses the glory of the old, and puts all its "bright lights out," in the grossest darkness. And Paul alludes to this, where he says, "There are bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial; the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another:" and the glory of the first,

which is the gospel, is just as far before the glory of the other, which is the law, as heaven is above the earth. " And there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon:" but the first, which shines in the gospel, is as bright against the other, which shines in the law, as the day is brighter than the night. " And there is another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another in glory; so is the resurrection of the dead:" and the resurrection and the life as far exceeds our former life, as the body, raised, exceeds the grave and its corruption; raised from, it is raised in glory, honour, immortality, and power, which makes it a " spiritual body;" and that sows the other, which is a " natural body," in corruption, weakness, dishonour, and death. Then it is proved to be of the first Adam, earthly; " and as is the earthly, such are they who are earthly:" but the other is the second Adam, " the Lord from heaven; and as is the heavenly, such are they who are heavenly; and as we have born the image of the earthly," by knowing it to be an earthly image, " we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And where these two images meet together, and are contrasted one with another, like a man's face contrasted by its image in a mirror, then the heavenly image discerns the earthly to be full of corruption, glossed and painted over by the righteousness of the law in it, receiving and holding the truth of the gospel in unrighteousness;

unrighteousness; then from heaven; or the heavenly image, the wrath and contempt of God is revealed against the other, with all its ungodliness and unrighteousness, because it holds the truth in unrighteousness. Now as this image of the earthly Adam, or the law, is the image of the beast, then, it follows, that as the law is overcome, the beast is overcome with the woman, or great city Babylon, that sits upon him, with all her walls and bulwarks of strength, all her rich commodities, traffic, merchandise, and merchants, who have made themselves spiritually rich, by bartering earthly works for heavenly grace; all her delicious eating and drinking, the flesh of her sacrifices, and wine of her love to God, which is a bed of whoredom, in which "she has made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication." But as John saw, in the vision of faith, some hundred years ago, her judgment coming on, we see the time accomplished, and her judgment actually come, and it has begun at the house of God; and by an open revelation and manifestation of the image of the beast in our flesh, we are enabled to overcome, and judge the whole mystical city, from the loftiest throne of the highest scorner, who says, "I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow, nor widowhood, nor loss of children any more," down to the lowest humiliation of her most reduced traders, who lie in dust and ashes, crying, "Alas! alas! that
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great city; for in one hour thy judgments are come." Her beautiful palaces, which were decorated and ornamented in the flesh, by the handy works of men, are become, in our view, the real "habitations of devils;" their cleanliness is become the "hold of every foul spirit;" her bartering and trading with God contains a nest of thieves and robbers, who, like Simon Magus, would purchase the Holy Ghost with money: her love is become the poison of dragons, and the "wine of wrath," because it is at war with the true Christ; and "fornication," because it is poured out to an idol, which she takes for the true God; and wine "of filthiness," because it defiles the spirit in the saints. Now it appears plain, that it has been for the purpose of revealing, rendering visible, and making manifest, in an open shew to us, this mystical harlot, in the attire of the "bride, the Lamb's wife; this devil, in "Samuel's mantle;" this "man of sin," in the garb of righteousness; this "Antichrist," in the form of Christ. That God has led us, for some years back, in a way contrary to all the world; and, though we knew not what he was doing, nor where he was leading us, yet we had the word, "ye shall know hereafter;" and now the word is fulfilled by the coming of the Spirit, who leads us into all truth concerning all the way we have hitherto come; and we know that he has been teaching us with a strong hand, that we might

might break all confederacy with the wicked.— Between two and three years ago, he began to strip me of my first comfort, and began to rend and tear my first love, which began to shake my good hope, closed up the access and liberty I had in prayer; then the wheels of diligence, in reading, meditation, and prayer, which I so much delighted in, dragged heavily, and, instead of finding pleasure from them, found them the greatest burden and task; and the more I struggled under the burden, and to fulfil my daily task, for strength and comfort, the more weakness and distress of heart I found, until the prayers and labours themselves began to be discovered as being sin; then the hand of presumptuous faith, which received the promises in the letter, began to be cut off. This was John the Baptist laying the ministry of condemnation to the root of the religion of the law in the heart, and this is the first real work of God: “the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached” by the spirit of John, which puts an end to both the righteousness of the law and the prophets, by making the law a Jordan of death, into which he baptised me, with its wrath and condemnation, its darkness and bondage, afflictions and sorrows. At this time I preached affliction as I felt it; and endeavoured to describe the operations of the Spirit in trouble; and pointed out the conditional promises, suitable to such
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and such cases. And then, when we got a little light to discover ourselves in the way, or any deliverance from our burdens, we rejoiced and were glad, and thought it to be Christ binding up the broken heart; whereas it was undoing the work of John, who laid the burden on the flesh. This proves that the comfort springing up for having it taken away was not from Christ, for he is not contrary to John, but comes after him, in the same way that he has prepared, and is far above and greater than John; but if the comforts and joys we then had came from Christ, John was above both him and them, because we did not enjoy them many hours, and sometimes not many minutes, until John again laid his ax to the root of them and hewed them down; as much as if he said, "I am not the Christ," nor any thing that is produced under me, "but there is one cometh after me, who is preferred before me, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to loose; he shall baptize with the Holy Ghost. I am not the "true light," but, by turning that light which springs up under me into darkness, I bear witness of a greater light to succeed. I am not the true comfort, but by turning all the "locusts and wild honey" of consolation that spring up under me, into the gall and wormwood of sin, I prepare the way for another comfort, and "another Comforter." Thus, as John kept cutting, and hewing, and preaching

affliction in my heart, I preached the same trouble and affliction to others; and many who had natural troubles, but could not discern between those which are natural and those which are spiritual, found their case described, as they thought, and could rejoice and be glad, and set to their seals that it was the word of the Lord, and that I was a minister sent of God; and as "Herod rejoiced in John's light for a season," they rejoiced in John's light in me; and as "Herod feared John because he appeared to be an holy man," so these feared, revered, and stood in awe of my word, because I appeared to be an holy man, living near to God, and keeping up constant fellowship and communion with him; only envy and jealousy, like cunning foxes, would be hunting about to find out some spots, stains, and blemishes in my face, lest I should get too perfect; but when I began to preach against this perfection, against all the holiness and humility, prayers and communion with God in the flesh, shewing that they were the fruits of the law, the same as John preached against the daughter of Herodias, who prefigures the offspring of the law, and told Herod that it was not lawful for him to marry her; then, as Herod lost all his friendship and respect for John, and "cut off his head in the prison," his successors, for the same cause, lost all their friendship and respect for John, in me, despised the light they formerly had, trampled upon all their experience

rience, seals, and strong confidence they had under his preaching, and at last cut off his head, by esteeming him no more a minister of the Lord. But in the room of John's head, and out of his ruins, the Lord from Heaven is risen, in a far greater and deeper ministry, and not only confirms John's doctrine against the Herodians; but where the first "chastised with whips, the second chastises with scorpions," and not only forbids the banns of marriage with the daughter of Herodias, but forbids all their preparations for, and ceremonies about, the wedding, with all their lusts, desires, prayers, hopes, and expectations of ever having it accomplished, and calls Herod, in all his profession, a crafty, subtle, cunning-fox, which fills his heart with such blood-thirstiness against the Lord, and such rage against the ministry of the Spirit, as makes him, without scruple, call it foolishness and perversion of Scripture. Foolishness, because it will not submit to be tried by the Honourable Faculty of Reason, and be judged by my Lord Carnal Criticism, seated upon his bench, as lofty as the Pope. Perversion of Scripture, because it perverts the letter, or the law, with all the experience of it, from being any part of the gospel, but condemning it, and them that trust in it, to Hell, as it did in time past, when "they said he had a devil, and was mad," or his doctrine flowed from a bad spirit, was foolishness, and perverted the Scripture;

ture; then he condemned them as a " generation of vipers, that could not escape the damnation of Hell." Yet their successors, when in their right mind, are forced to confess that the doctrine is either too high, or too low, for them, so that they cannot understand it, " whether it be from heaven, or of men;" and this proves, that, though it be perversion of Scripture, they do not pervert the Scripture, but fulfil it; for it is written, " these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, *speake evil of those things which they understand not*, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," which is the righteousness of the law in their hearts, receiving the righteousness of the gospel, corrupting it after this manner: *First*, By bringing their natural wants to the Lord, and pleading his promises in prayer, and looking to be heard and supplied, because they plead. *Secondly*, By bringing their troubles, and pleading *them* for deliverance. *Thirdly*, By bringing their natural sin, and pleading that for pardon, and, as the conditional promise says, " If any man confess and forsake his sins, he shall find mercy," by having the old atonement, or blood of the law applied to the conscience, which produces peace there. But then, when the new atonement, or blood of Christ is preached in the cross, making perfect peace with God, and perfect war with the natural conscience, and the peace of it, then their hearts are filled with madness, war, and enmity

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against it, which is "trampling under foot the blood of the Son of God, and counting it an unholy" and unpeaceable "thing," and that contrary to their former light, their unpeaceable conscience, and the living testimonies which they cannot overthrow, but, through pride, stubbornness, and maliciousness, they resist and speak evil of the free Spirit that brings the free propitiation and redemption, which is "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace." And as they can, and do at the same time pray God to 'lead them right, to shine upon their path, to bring them out of trouble, to fulfil their counsels, and wish him to display his arm in proving them to be right, and us to be wrong; this is crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh; and if such men may escape the damnation of hell, all the devils already there may escape it; for, says Paul, "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened" to know the truth, "and have tasted of the heavenly gift" in the flesh, like new wine put into an old bottle, "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," in his gifts of prophecy, prayer, &c. "and have tasted the good word of God" in the natural affection, "and the powers of the world to come," or letter of the gospel, in all its powerful effects; in calming and quieting the troubled consciences of the way-side hearers, "if they fall away," or lose all this, or give it up through malicious enmity against the pure gospel; "it is impossible to renew them again

again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;" so "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness" in the law, which satisfied their consciences, "than when they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them, for there now remains no more sacrifice for sin," as they have lost the first, which is of the law, by piercing their consciences with war and enmity; and trample upon the second, which is the blood of the Son, with scorn and contempt, as an unholy thing; so all that remains is, "a fearful looking for of judgment," except the Devil applies some of his plaisters and white rags to heal the conscience. All the hope that such men have depends upon a peradventure we may be wrong, as so many good men are against us; but who these good men are is of no consequence to us, as we know, feelingly, that the good man at home, or within us, is become the greatest sinner in the whole world, and his goodness the greatest sin; and we know all other good men are the same, therefore we need in nowise be afraid of their goodness, especially as there are none contrary to us in spirit, who can describe aright either sin or righteousness. And all religion, without the true knowledge of these two things, is no better than a wisp of straw, or the herbage, or leaves of a green bay tree, which is verdant and green in summer, but
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withers and fades in winter; but except this evil tree be cut up by the root, so that the goodness and fat in its heart may be discovered to be corrupt and evil, a good tree can never be planted. But this I can say for myself, that I know the Spirit, or axe of John the Baptist, has not only cut partly through, but clean through the root of the old tree in me, and levelled it with the ground; so that what these good men before mentioned hold for life and righteousness, I feel to be a "body of sin and death;" that which is their happy enjoyment of God, and sweet fellowship and communion with him, is now become my greatest misery and separation from God; that which is their liberty and freedom, is now my bondage and captivity; and that which is their gospel, pouring its blessings upon them, is become my law, pouring its curses upon me; and as they wish to be eternally united to it, that they may enjoy God, I wish to be eternally separated from it, as far as the east is from the west, that I may live to God, and in God; and as all its kind embraces now work death in me, that is a proof of being divorced from it, as an husband; and as all its contents which used to comfort me, such as its experience of afflictions, and hopes of deliverances, &c. now distress, plague, and grieve me, that proves me to be dead to the law, and the law unto me. But as it still has the dominion over the flesh, and chastens it, scourges, torments, and

and bruises it, for to destroy the life of it; and I see that life, and turn from it in spirit, *steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, having a lively faith in God's mercy, through Christ*; that is a proof that I have got the "doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins." And if I feel, as I do at times, my heart a nest of vipers, full of spiritual wickedness, and self-righteous ungodliness against God, as well as all manner of corruptions against the law; and yet, at the same time, can rejoice in spirit, because a redemption and propitiation is found there, which covers this world of original sin, so that it is not imputed; and though it storms and rages, yet is to me as if I had no sin, by the triumph of the Spirit over it. This shews that I have seen the true "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world;" and, as by entering into him, I find a righteousness, that puts an end to all sin; a resurrection, that is past the reach of all death; a happiness, that is far beyond all misery; a heaven, that supersedes the earthly heaven, and turns it into hell, and vanquishes it; a rest, that overthrows all carnal rests, and also labour, and leaves them in the wilderness; a divinity, that swallows up all humanity, the world, and time itself, in eternity. This proves that I have risen in the true resurrection, and am made "to sit in heavenly places," and have entered the *Holy of Holies*; but no unhallowed flesh and blood can enter here, nor know the way through the veil,
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or be able to address the Mercy-seat within, or understand the nature of that seat, or the wings that cover it, because the manner of address is purely in the Spirit, the throne is perfectly composed of grace, and the wings shadowing it are the love and eternal affection of the Father to the Son; and the same love that the Father hath to the Son, the Son hath to us; and as the Father dwells in the Son, the Son also dwells in the bosom of the Father, and both dwell in us by the Spirit, and we dwell in them by faith, and faith works by love; but this love is an inconceivable mystery, and utterly unfelt and unknown by the outer Court of Flesh, Sense, and Reason, because it is war and hatred against these, and these are war and enmity against it, so that it is known only and felt in the *Holy of Holies*; but, as I said before, no flesh can see, or enter in there; no haughty scorner, who has mounted the highest room, without being in the lowest, under the spirit of judgment, by John the Baptist, can enter there, for "he that exalts himself shall be put lower in the presence of the Prince;" no holy worker, who keeps himself free from sin, by a close walk and fellowship with God, as he thinks, can enter there, for "publicans and harlots shall enter in before these;" no spiritual rich man, whose fields of nature bring forth plentifully, so that he fares sumptuously upon them every day, can enter there, for "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,

needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven;" no learned scribe, who understands all mysteries, can describe the way in there, much less enter, for "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God; where then is the Scribe?" No lawyer that expounds the experience of Scripture in the letter, can enter there, "for these take away the key of spiritual knowledge, and not only enter not in themselves, but hinder those who do;" no hired servant clothed in strange apparel, having a garment made of linen and woollen, or the new linen cloth of the gospel, patched to the old woollen stuff of the law; or the righteousness of the first, added to the righteousness of the second, can enter there, else the King would strip him naked for his presumption: in short, "nothing that defileth, that worketh abomination, or maketh a lye" against the real truth, can ever enter the royal palace, or *Holy of Holies*. And as we have all these things I have now mentioned in our flesh, and both they and it are barred out, yet we do enter in the Spirit by faith; we can, therefore, "set to our seals that God is true," without any untruth in him, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" that "God is a spirit," without all gross matter of sense, and without all corporal substances of nature;" that "God is love," but so pure, flowing from the Father to the mystical Son, that there is not the least spot, or stain, or mixture in it, of any affec-

tion arising from the heart of man, or that can be felt or enjoyed by the animal nature, or perceived by the carnal eye of Reason; but it is a love past all knowledge of these, known only, and enjoyed in the Spirit; for which reason, we do, in the name of God, protest against, renounce, and abjure all the former love we had, and which is now abounding in the world, felt and understood by the flesh, as the very life, spirit, and essence of Popery; the wine of her spiritual whoredom, the pleasures of hell, and cup, and communion of devils, squeezed and pressed from the seed of the serpent, and relished and drank by a generation of vipers. But this fierce doctrine will just go as well down with them, as Christ's went down with the Pharisees at Jerusalem, because it was far above their comprehension; they said he was a deceiver, a perverter of the Scripture, and was mad; and because he preached against Moses and the holy temple, they called him an arrogant blasphemer; and because he made many dissatisfied with the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, they called him a mover of sedition; and because he sharply reprov'd the hypocrisy of all their professions, they cried, Crucify him, crucify him, it is not fit for such a man to live. And I believe his words are true, respecting their children, in the present generation, that, if they could kill us, or stop our mouths, or render us any mischief, they would think

think it to be doing God high service, and would as willingly establish their wretched cause by human force as ever the Papists did. However, I send this Sermon, bound down into the midst of their burning fiery furnace, for to take its trial; and though I will not say that all the words in it are consistent with Scripture, yet, if they are not, the Scripture itself tolerates a wrong word, and censures those who attempt to make a man an offender for a word; yet I will say, and stand to it to the last breath in my body, that the Spirit, and truth, which are the weightier matters of the Sermon, are consistent with the oracles of God; therefore, I shall only add, by way of caution to all hostile foes, that they ought to consider Gamaliel's counsel; before they begin to resist; "And now, I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, least haply ye be found even to fight against God;" but if they will fight they must bear the consequence. God has brought us through a dark night of tribulation and death, when our dead bodies lay dead in the streets of the great city, as mentioned, Rev. xi. 8.; but since that he has raised us up, by pouring the Spirit upon us from on high; has made the day to dawn, and has brought the sun about the rising, and has given us some glimpses of the *latter days'* glory, which is to exceed in brightness all that has

been since the world began; and as he has brought us to its rising, he will enable us to tarry, like the disciples at Jerusalem, until we be endowed with greater power from on high, by a far greater measure of the comfort, light, and power of the Holy Ghost being poured out than has yet been, which will assuredly bring on the destruction of the mystical city, mentioned in Rev. xi. 13. and the damnation of all the hypocrites within it, when all the elect seed shall be brought to Zion's glory and brightness of his rising, until they are all clothed with the sun, and have the moon, or law under their feet. Then cometh the end, when he shall have put down all rule and authority of the prince of darkness, and made his mystical body triumph over them upon the cross with himself, and put an end to them, and with them the world, and time itself; and whilst the world, death, and hell are cast into the lake of fire, the overcomers enter life eternal, for ever freed from all plague, and cross of sin, and death. Until then, I remain your willing servant in the gospel,

5 0059 J. LOWES.

Grantham, Sept. 9th, 1800.

THE
MIDNIGHT CRY:
A SERMON.

MALACHI, Chap. IV. Ver. 5, 6.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

THIS is the last prophet that was sent to prophesy during the Old Testament dispensation; and, as he was the last, he prophesied chiefly concerning the last things that ever were to be done upon the earth; and, as they were to be the last, so they were to be the greatest, by a greater display of God's power being put forth than ever was known before, even to divide the earth into two parts, and burn up all the wicked with the one,

and bring out all the righteous and save them with the other. *For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts—that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, i. e. from the wicked, and grow up, i. e. by yourselves, as calves of the stall; and ye shall tread down the wicked, trample upon them, and despise them, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts (Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3.); and this is the day mentioned in my text, which follows:*

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Now, from this text, I shall shew you,

First, What the great and dreadful day of the Lord is.

Secondly, Who Elijah is, that is to be sent before it.

Thirdly, What his office is, *viz.* to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers.

Fourthly, The cause lest God come and smite the earth with a curse.

Then

Then, *first*, What is the great and dreadful day of the Lord? A day signifies light, when the sun shines, in opposition to darkness and night, when the sun is gone down. A day of the Lord signifies his light shining, in opposition to the light of this world, which is darkness. When the Holy Ghost enlightens a soul, it is the day of the Lord to that soul, and it has two effects—destruction and salvation. *Thou turnest man unto destruction: again thou sayest, Return, ye children of men*, Psal. xc. 3. And here you may observe, that whatever tends to destroy the flesh is salvation to the spirit—that which kills and mortifies the flesh is the life of the spirit—that which mars and confounds the way of the flesh, is the way of the spirit—and that which discovers the angelic forms of the devil in the flesh, is the light of the spirit, which *shines brighter and brighter until the perfect day*, which will be the day of the Lord; for Paul says, *Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*, 1 Corinth. v. 5. Now, the same effects which this day has on the soul particularly, the same it will have in the church universally, namely, the salvation of God's spiritual work, wherever it is, and the destruction of all the enemies who set themselves against it.

During the Old Testament dispensation, whenever God sent a saviour to deliver his Israel from

the oppression and cruelty of any foreign nation, by whom they were often held in captivity, their deliverance was called *the day of the Lord*. As, for instance, when he sent Moses to bring them out of Egypt, Jephtha to deliver them from the Ammonites, Gideon from the Midianites, Barak and Deborah from the Canaanites, Samson from the Philistines, and David from all the nations round about: these were days of the Lord; and that was one particularly, when Cyrus, whom he had raised up, anointed, and strengthened for to destroy Babylon, put forth a proclamation for the Jews' deliverance, and return from their long, sad, and wearisome captivity under the Babylonish yoke; and their deliverance was joined with their enemies' destruction, as Jeremiah hath prophesied: *For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge himself of his adversaries; and the sword shall devour, and shall be satiate, and made drunk with their blood; for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country, by the river Euphrates,* Jer. xlv. 10. Now all these days of salvation which Israel had of old were typical of a great gospel-day, which was to come after Christ came, in the flesh, and was predicted in various parts of the old prophets; and this text is one, *I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*. This was fulfilled in John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way

way of the Lord. And how did he do it? I answer, By turning the world just upside down; by taking a *Pharisee*, who was the *head*, and placing him in the *publican's* room, who was the *tail*, and taking the *publican*, and putting him in the *Pharisee's* seat, as head. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree, Luke i. 52. And as John found both these persons in one man, the Pharisee seeking his own honour and glory of man, he furnished the publican with confession of sin, prayers, pleadings, and petitions for mercy. As the first boasted, the second confessed—the first was a *mountain* that exalted itself in self-consequence, which made the other a *valley*, abasing himself for his pride; and these in one person were two *crooked things*, which all the power upon earth could never make straight; but John was sent to abase the *mountain*, exalt the *valley*, and make *crooked things* straight. And how did he do it? I answer, By preaching *repentance* to the publican; or, that he should turn from, and leave the Pharisee altogether; which turning is *denying self*, and that makes a *cross*; and John says, Take up this and follow the *Lamb*; so they did, and the *Lamb* confirmed his doctrine, saying, *if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me* (Matt. xvi. 24.): and all the while he was with his little flock on earth, he kept instructing them in the *mystery of his cross*, and said to them, *Ye are they who*

who have continued with me in my temptations; I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me (Luke xxii. 28, 29.) and this kingdom was the gift of the the Holy Ghost, which they were to receive after his resurrection from the dead; but, until then, they were to endure the hardships of the cross, and that which made their cross and trouble, was the matter of joy, triumph, and rejoicing of all the hypocrites at that time; for so the Saviour said to his disciples, Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, (John xvi. 20.) and their joy into heaviness, and their laughter into howling, mourning, and woe, which was fulfilled when the day of Pentecost was fully come. Then they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled the place where they were, and, being full, they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, (Acts ii. 1—4.) and they lived and walked in the fellowship, communion, and joy of the Holy Ghost. At the same time, great fear and terror, death and destruction to all their religion, weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, instead of joy, fell upon the chief priests, scribes, and all their enemies. Then this was the great and dreadful day of the Lord, as Peter said, This is that which was spoken of by Joel the prophet, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit

Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and your young men shall see visions; and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants, and on mine handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath—blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun, or Jewish false christ, shall be turned into darkness, and the moon of their natural light and reason into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come, Acts ii. 16—20. This prophecy was fulfilled before, in the disciples' experience, when the horror of great darkness fell upon the Saviour at his death. Then the disciples, less or more, were baptised into the same darkness, and then their sun went down; and when their Saviour was sealed up in the tomb, and no appearance of his rising, though he had told them that he would rise. This turned the light of their reason into blood, which drove them to cry unto the Lord; and it came to pass, that whosoever called upon the name of the Lord was saved; for the twelve tribes instantly cried unto God, hoping to come unto the enjoyment of the promise made unto their fathers (Acts xxvi. 7.) which they did, when the day of Pentecost was fully come; then salvation fell to their lot, and destruction and damnation to the lot of their enemies. This wonderful day happened near the end of the Jewish dispensation, which was called their world; and if you read in many
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parts of the New Testament, you will find another *great and dreadful day* predicted to happen in the *latter days*, or towards the end of the gospel-world, called Christ's second coming, which is to be something in the same way as he came first, and is said to take place a little before the expiration, or completion of Antichrist's reign, which will be, according to the longest calculation, finished and ended within fifty, sixty, or seventy years at the farthest, from this present time. And it appears to me, that both Popery and this present world will end and expire together: for I cannot find, in all the scriptures, one prediction of any time or circumstance, that is to take place in this world, after the complete destruction of Popery, except the thousand years reign, or millennium, in the new earth, Rev. xx. 2. xxi. 1. And it appears to me, that as the spirit of the Jewish dispensation was destroyed by the *coming of the Holy Ghost and his brightness*, about forty years before the city of Jerusalem and country of Canaan were laid waste by the Romans; so it appears, that *the breath of the Lord's mouth, and brightness of his second coming* (2 Theff. ii. 8.) will destroy the spirit of Popery about the same space of time, before the complete destruction of its body, which will then die daily until the end. Then, if this be true, *the great and dreadful day of the Lord* is very near; and that it is very near and just at hand I do firmly believe,

believe. *First*, From the signs and appearances of the present times. *Secondly*, From the description given of it in Scripture. *Thirdly*, From the wonderful light which God has given me of late into these passages relating to it, from the various workings of my own experience. And, *fourthly*, from the awful state I see the whole body of professors to be in, and the greatest part of the true church to be in midnight darkness, so that I do verily believe this great day of Christ's second coming to be just at hand; and, perhaps, before a twelvemonth be over, or even much less time, you may see some of the signs of it. But, that you may not take the words from my mouth only, let us examine what the scriptural signs are, which go before it; and of these you will find many given by Christ himself when on earth; from which I shall select eight, which have already appeared, and are infallible signs, or proofs, that his second coming is at hand.

First, After his disciples had asked him privately, *When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* He answered and said unto them, *Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many,* Matt. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. This has already taken place; but those who cry loudest, *I am Christ*, and are the greatest deceivers, are not the Pope, nor any in connection with him; neither

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are they Arminians, Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, nor even common letter-preachers and hearers, of which this country swarms as thick at this time, as the land of Egypt did with locusts, when Moses stretched out his rod, *Exod. x. 13.* But the greatest deceivers are those who profess and confess the real experience of Christ, and seem to possess his Spirit. These are *Antichrist*, which is now in the world, also manifested and revealed openly, that, *if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect* (*Matt. xxiv. 24.*) finally, which he does deceive for a time; but Christ says, *I have told you before*, that, when this comes to pass, you may remember that I have told you of it, that it would come, and would be an infallible sign of my second coming; and Paul confirms the same doctrine when writing to the Thessalonians—he says, *Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in your mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us; as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, which I before spoke of, the son of perdition, typified by the Pope, who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, or the experience of God, sitteth in the temple of God.* Mark that, sitteth in the temple of
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of God, or in the hearts of God's people, *there shewing himself that he is God, whose coming at first was after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish* (2 Theff. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10.) and then found way into the hearts of them that are saved. And, because of his meek and smooth appearance for deception, John, in the Revelations, calls him the second *beast*, like a lamb—and *I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, or church; and he had two horns like a lamb, but he spake like a dragon*, Rev. xiii. 11. His speech shews what spirit he is of; but his horns, like a lamb, shew that he not only has a *sheep's skin*, but, even in word, contends for the power of godliness; at the same time, it is by the power and spirit of the dragon that he speaks, and, by this imitation of the power of God, he doth great wonders; and, by these wonders, he deceiveth those that dwell on the earth, by means of those miracles which he has power to do, Rev. xiii. 14. This is the most prominent sign going before the Lord's appearance, mentioned in the Bible; and every one that has got the least furnace work on his soul must confess that it is come to pass, and is now in the world.

The second sign—Christ said, *Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass—for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,*

kingdom, Matt. xxiv. 6, 7. If you understand this in a literal sense, it is already come to pass in the French war. If you take it in a spiritual point of view, which ought to be done, it is come to pass also; for *the holy seed* of God's remnant, of which his *kingdom* consists, is stirred up, and at war with the kingdom of Satan, and all his subjects within it. But, you may say, has not this always been the case? Yes, it has in a measure; but when was it that the *holy seed* was so brought out from *hypocrites*, made to stand on their own feet, and set their faces in war against the whole professed church, as they are and do at this time? so that they may say with Jeremiah, *Wo is me, my mother, that thou has born me; a man of strife and contention to the whole earth*, Jer. xv. 10. But as they *strive* and *contend* with the *earth*, the *earth* *strives* and *contends* with them; and the *beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them by the sword of law and reason*, which swords only can have power to hurt a spiritual body; and their wounded, or *dead bodies*, shall lie in the street of the great city, which, spiritually, is called *Sodom and Egypt*, where also our Lord was crucified—or mystical Rome, or Jerusalem, that now is, and is in bondage with her children. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put

put in graves (Rev. xi. 7—9.), or covered up in sleep or rest, because of the torment they feel, which torment and pain, though they be dead, makes them fight all the time; for, at that time, Michael, their great prince, shall stand up (Dan. xii. 1.) to help them. And there was war in heaven, (or the church), Michael and his angels fought against the devil—and the dragon, and his (holy) angels fought against them, but prevailed not; neither was their place any more in heaven; but they were cast out into the earth, Rev. xii. 7—9. And any body with half a spiritual eye, or one dim, may see that all this is come to pass; this holy war is begun and carrying on, under the banner of Michael, who is casting the devil and his angels headlong out of the church; which is preparing the way for the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

The third sign—Christ said, *Ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, Luke xxi. 16, 17.* To betray us signifies, in one sense, to deny having any connection with us, as *Peter* denied his Lord; it also means to sell us into the hands of our enemies, as *Judas* did his Master. Parents doing it signify elders of the church, who are called fathers (1 Tim. v. 1.) betraying their trust, proving unfaithful to their Master, wasting his goods, and selling his children for the love of strange children, and making us servants and them sons. Brethren betray

betray us by fleeing from us in the time of our calamity, as the disciples fled and disowned their Saviour when he was carried away to suffer; *then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. As it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered,* Matt. xxvi. 56. Zech. xiii. 7. In like manner, says the Saviour, *they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, as they did me, and shall kill you by their law, and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake,* Matt. xxiv. 9. And this is fulfilled; for I do not know if there be more than twenty persons now in the world, but what do in heart hate me *for his name's sake*, and for telling them the *truth*; as it is written, *Then shall many be offended,* (Matt. xxiv. 10.) *i. e.* at the word, as they were when Christ spoke it concerning his sufferings—*all ye shall be offended because of me this night,* Matt. xxvi. 31. This *preaching of the cross* is the *offence*, and *because iniquity*, or spiritual wickedness, *abounds* against it to blind the eyes and deceive the heart, *the love of many shall wax cold,* Matt. xiv. 12. Now, all this has come to pass—*fathers* have betrayed us, and sold us for arch hypocrites; *brethren* and *friends* have fled from us and joined the enemy, though, I believe, some of them, contrary to their own conscience, their raillery, scorn, and contempt, has *delivered us over to be afflicted*; and their calling the truth errors, and perversion of scripture, shews that they are *offended* at it, and their love so far is waxed cold to the
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real cross of Christ, that they hate it, and flee from it, as if it was the Devil. All this shews that *the dreadful day of the Lord* is at hand.

The fourth sign—Christ said, *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place; who so readeth let him understand* (Matt. xxiv. 15.) that my coming is near. The *abomination of desolation*, spoken of by Daniel, is described by him to be an eminent idol, or false christ, decked and furnished out with all the gold, silver, and rich, splendid appearance of the true Christ, set up by the Devil in the spirit of the flesh, and there works desolation to the Spirit of God, which makes it appear an abomination in his sight. Then, if I see a false gospel set up in my flesh, consisting of light, life, liberty, and joy, and these working desolation to the spirit, by becoming a plague to it, and, in the sight of God, appear abominable, by its leading away the heart from him, then I see the *abomination of desolation set up in myself*; and if I see others rejoicing and triumphing in those very things which I feel abominable, that is a proof that those things are set up as God in their hearts; and if I see some of God's people holding and worshipping them, I see the *abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, and where it ought not*; for God ought to stand there, they being his temple, hence called, *the holy place*, fulfilling what Daniel says, and he (Antichrist) shall plant the tabernacles of

of his palace in the glorious, holy mountain, between the seas (Dan. xi. 45.); which holy mountain was the holy land in the type, but the spiritual temple, or hearts of God's people, in the reality; for God does not consecrate one place, or piece of ground, literally, to be *holy*, more than another; but the Spirit of Christ consecrates the heart to be holy, and the spirit of Antichrist defiles it, and makes it unholy; and when we see him set up by some of God's own children for the Spirit of Christ, it is a plain proof that the *tabernacles of his palaces are planted in the glorious, holy mountain*, and that *the abomination of desolation is standing in the holy place*. And it is a wonderful and strange thing to think, and yet true, that the greatest part of those who have left us, and gone over to the contrary side, have jumped, all at once, into the full liberty of the gospel, free from all bondage, into a full assurance of faith, at a point and certainty that they are right and we are wrong, without either testimony from God, or trial from man, into a full joy of the Holy Ghost, as they think, casting out all their sorrows. But it is nothing but a mad frenzy and delusion of the Devil, as sure as there is a God in heaven; for John writes concerning them—and they *that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry, and send gifts one to another* (Rev. xi. 10.) saying, *I sit as a queen*, or the bride, the Lamb's wife, at his right hand, therefore, shall
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see no sorrow, nor widowhood, nor loss of children any more (Rev. xviii. 7.); but she is sadly mistaken, for in one hour her judgments shall come (Rev. xviii. 10.), and she shall lose all that she now possesses; for wo be unto them that are with child, or fruitful in children, as Hagar was, and them that give suck in those days (Matt. xxiv. 19.): or whose breasts are filled with the milk of consolation, springing from the effects of union with this idol. And as we see this abomination of desolation set up, and worshipped now by all the world, the same as the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians, let him that seeth it, and readeth it, and understandeth it, know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is at hand.

The fifth sign—Christ said, *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, Matt. xxiv. 29.* This has been already fulfilled, so far as it relates to us. The sun here means the false gospel-light and wisdom which is now in the world, which, in our view, is discovered to be nothing but the *light* of the law, and that I feel daily to be *blackness and darkness*, and the plague of it smites the heart, which is the *moon*, and turns its *reason* into *confusion*, its *holiness* into *sin*, or *blood*, and then the soul *sits in darkness*, waits on God for *light*, and will be satisfied with no other light but that

which comes from him, which makes *the stars withdraw their shining, and fall from heaven*; or, in other words, all the *bright lights* of men's wisdom to go out; then we are in sensible *darkness* and *midnight*: but that which makes our *darkness* is their *light*, and that which makes our *midnight* is their *midday*. But when *the day of the Lord* comes, it will turn our *midnight* into *midday*, and their *midday* into *midnight*. This is clearly pointed out in the description of the *foolish and wise virgins*; they thought themselves in the *day*, as appears by laying their *lamps* aside, and out of use, for they were neither *trimmed* nor *burning*; but when the *midnight cry* arose from another quarter, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh*, then they awoke out of their lethargy, arose, and *trimmed their lamps* (Matt. xxv. 6, 7.), and, by the oil in them, found themselves in *midnight*; and this *midnight cry* says, *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, and it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains*, Joel ii. 1, 2. The morning spread upon the mountains is *light*, but as it is here called *darkness*, it is to shew that their light is *darkness*, and will be turned into *darkness*; as Ezekiel says, *For the day of the Lord is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy*

a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen, Ezek. xxx. iii. But as they know nothing of this cloudy day, or this darkness now, so they know not what is meant by the bright day approaching; for they are looking, first, for an outward persecution from the Papists, as if the night was to consist of that; and then what they call an universal spread of the gospel is to expose and destroy the blind superstitions of literal Popery; this is to bring the day of the Lord; but the prophet Amos reproves these carnal and gross notions concerning it, saying, *Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord: to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light, i. e. to you. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light, even very dark, and no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.—For you hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine thereof: for I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right: there-*

fore shall the prudent keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time, Amos v. 10—13. But to those few who are come into this evil time, and know it to be night, Amos speaks, Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning (Amos v. 8.); and, when the morning comes, to you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2. This glorious morning I believe to be very near, even so near, that, for these two weeks past, some of the stars of its twilight have been darting and shining into my soul, like so many suns, discovering such mysteries of spiritual wickedness as cannot be exceeded on earth, and such master-pieces of Satanic arts as can scarce be exceeded in hell, so that I never, in all my life, saw myself such a monster of wickedness, and so abominable before God. But the effects of it has been not to drive me to despair, but quite contrary; it has wrought the fullest assurance that it could be in no other but the light of the Spirit that I saw myself in such a manner, which led me to loath, hate, and abhor myself for my abominations before God; and I believe this knowledge and conviction of sin is the first work of the Spirit, the dawning of the day, and sign of its approach, the first work of the Spirit; for, saith Christ, when he comes he shall convince the world of sin (John xvi. 8.), in cleaving to the law, which is unbelief, because

because they believe not in me. The knowledge and confession of sin are the sure messengers and harbingers of complete salvation from sin; they are the dawning of the day, because the Spirit, that convinces of sin, is the sign of the Son of man; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke xxi. 28.), and the great and dreadful day of the Lord is at hand.

The sixth sign—Christ said, *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be, Matt. xxiv. 37.* When God intended to drown the old world by a flood, he warned Noah of it before hand, and him only, by shewing him that the earth, or earthly church, then was totally corrupt, and that all flesh in it had corrupted their way. *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood, Gen. vi. 13, 14.* And Noah believed all this that God had said. *By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, Heb. xi. 7.* And this spiritual ark was and is prepared, by trying what will endure and keep out the water, for which purpose the soul is brought into the trial, or into the water of affliction

tion, which is the law, and is called John's baptism, which washes the flesh, so as to discover the filthiness and wickedness that is in it, or stirs up sin, preparing the way for the remission of sin; and all the time this way is preparing, the long-suffering of God is seen to endure, as Noah saw it. *When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water—the like figure whereunto baptism, that is, that of John, now saveth us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh; for this baptism does not do that, but makes it known, and then faith turns from it in spirit, and lays hold of and receives the Lord, which satisfies conscience and fulfils the law, and is therefore called the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ in spirit by faith (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.), which is the ark rising above the waters of the flood; and Noah having thus prepared an ark by faith, and become heir of the righteousness of faith, he became also a preacher of that righteousness (2 Pet. ii. 5.); by which preaching he first condemned his own flesh, and then the whole ungodly church, or world; and as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man. And I cannot now see, or hear tell of any preaching, or hearing of this righteousness in the spirit, or any condemning of the spirit of the world in all this country, except*

cept by a small few about Grantham. And if we be right in spirit by preaching such righteousness, and condemning the whole world, the whole world that oppose us are wrong alike, for they are all in one spirit; but if we be wrong in spirit, then they are all right. But however it may be, there are only two spirits; and they have got one, and we have got the other, and as ours condemns theirs, as Noah's did, so theirs condemn, mock, and scoff at ours, calling it proud, arrogant, presumptuous, condemning every thing but itself, as the Antideluvians did Noah's. And Peter tells you this is to be the case—*This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? or where is the appearance of these things being fulfilled that you talk about? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation,* 2 Pet. iii. 1—4. The fathers then were the first founders of the Jewish dispensation, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs; the fathers now reckoned were the eminent reformers, such as Luther and Melancton, who turned the
world

world up side down, and brought about the reformation from Popery; but since these fathers fell asleep, our scoffers say, that all things remain as they were then established; for this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old (or Noah's ark); and the earth (or church in that ark) standing out of the water by faith, and in the water by affliction, brought a flood of waters on the corrupt church, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with waters, perished (2 Pet. iii. 5, 6.); first, by the sentence of Noah's faith, and then by the fulfilment of God's judgment. But this our scoffers are wilfully ignorant of, lest it should be the same now as it in reality is; and Peter confirms it, but the heavens and earth (or church), which are now by the same word (of faith), are kept in store reserved unto fire, or to make fire, or to be the fire of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, 2 Pet. iii. 7. And if there be only two men in these heavens, who have got the true faith in them, by it they can hold fast all the ungodly world to fire, and to the dreadful day of judgment coming on; but how can they do it? First, by judging and condemning all the ungodliness that is in themselves, and enduring God's anger, as his chastening rod upon it, which is called working his judgment: Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness

*righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be
 bid in the day of the Lord's anger, Zeph. ii. 3.
 That which makes the soul meek is the spirit of
 judgment on the one side, breaking the heart
 with sorrow for sin; and on the other, a good
 hope, through grace, of receiving pardon for it:
 these two working together make the soul meek;
 and such a soul works God's judgment, by laying
 the true judgment to the line of every branch of his
 experience, and then the hail of anger, coming
 down, sweeps away all the refuges of lies contained
 in the flesh, which, being discovered, faith turns
 from them with disgust, and seeks God in spirit
 and in truth; seeks after his meekness and his right-
 eousness; and when they are found, faith holds
 them fast, at the same time holds fast the flesh
 with all the ungodliness in it, whether in self or
 in others, for judgment and the prayer of faith
 then hastens the judgment on, which is called
 looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day
 of God (2 Pet. iii. 12.); and the spirit of faith be-
 ing wounded with our own and their ungod-
 liness, sharpens it as a sword, to execute the ven-
 geance written when this day of judgment does
 come. My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold
 it shall come down upon Idumea, the people of my
 curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled
 with blood (or sin), it is made fat with fatness (of
 ungodly profession), and with the blood of lambs and
 goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams (or hypo-
 crisy.*

crisy of hypocrites): for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah (or city of Esau), and great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorn (or strong men), shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls (or great oppressors), and their land shall be soaked with blood (or guilt), and their dust (or earthly mind), made fat with the fatness (of God's recompence). For it is the day of God's vengeance, and the year of recompence for to settle and decide the present controversy of Zion, Isa. xxxiv. 5—8. This sword of judgment, which is now drawing out of its scabbard and sharpening, will never be put up and sheathed again, until it brings down the seven last vials of God's wrath upon the beast, and decides the last great battle of the Lord God Almighty, in the place of Armagiddon (Rev. xvi. 16.), and slays the flesh of all the spiritual lords and mighty men now on the earth. I had such a view of this great slaughter last night, the certainty of its coming, and the short distance of time before it does come, that my flesh trembled with fear and dread, and stood in awe before God, at his judgments, wishing that they might not come; at the same time, praying in spirit that they might come; and come they will, and that speedily, as sure as vengeance belongs to God; for her sins, that is, of mystical Babylon, or the corrupt church, have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquity.—reward her, even as she rewarded you by her plagues

plagues, and double unto her, double according to her works, in the cup of affliction, which she hath filled to you, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, namely, in this great and dreadful day of the Lord approaching, which will bring upon her death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings, or self-willed, and presumptuous preachers of the earth, who have committed fornication with her, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off, for the fear of her torments, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come, Rev. xvii. 5—10. And as sure as this abominable beast of Antichrist is now revealed, and made manifest in the vision of faith, and overcome by faith, and testified against and condemned; so sure is the dreadful day at hand for God to fulfil his word. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, or water of life issuing from the throne, mingled with fire of judgment, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, which is a whore's forehead covered with modesty, and over

his mark, which is mystery Babylon the great, or strong presumption; and over the number of his name, which is the number of a man, and as far as the devil can lead him in the arithmetic of spiritual wickedness, stand on a sea of glass by faith, having the harps of God, which is the melody of the Spirit: and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, because like him they have been faithful; and the song of the Lamb, because by him they have conquered, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints: all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest, Rev. xv. 2—4. This is already done; and John says, directly after, And after that I looked, and behold, the temple, or mystical body of the Church, containing the true tabernacle which the Lord, had pitched, in the heart of which is the testimony of Jesus, or spirit of prophecy; and this, says John, was opened in heaven, or the Church: and the seven angels, or witnesses, came out of the temple, having the seven last plagues, clothed in pure and white linen of righteousness, and having their breasts, or affections, girded with golden girdles of truth. And one of the four beasts before the throne gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, or vessels of faith, before fitted and prepared in the furnace, and them be filled full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple, or Church,

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was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, which is light, power, and glory to those in the temple; but darkness, weakness, smoke, and confusion to those on the outside—and no man was able to enter into the temple, or meaning of its power and glory, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled (Rev. xv. 5—8.); and this will be when the great and dreadful day of the Lord is fully come.

The seventh sign—Christ said, Likewise as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they married, and gave in marriage, Luke xvii. 28. This is fulfilling now, they are eating the body of Christ by a false faith, which is eating it unworthily; not discerning his spiritual body, because they cannot discern their own natural body, which is sin; and if they cannot discern their own sin, they cannot come to him as sinners; and therefore, presume to take the gospel, without a true warrant, and so eat damnation, or judgment, to their own souls; and they drink the wine of spiritual fornication, or false joy and affections, because they cannot discern between the joy of the Holy Ghost, and that of the flesh, stirred up by the devil, to imitate the other; and they are marrying fifties and hundreds to the heavenly Bridegroom, without ever having them divorced from the earthly one, by the killing dispensation of the law, and this unlawfully keeping two husbands, makes them all spiritual adulterers.

adulterers and adulteresses; and whilst this is the case, their preaching and conversation favours nothing but of the filthy dregs of mystical Babylon's cup, even though their conversation, to appearance, be as holy as an angel's from heaven, and their speech as sound as Paul's, yet the mystical harlot is at the bottom of all; and as just Lot was vexed, and his righteous soul grieved with the filthy conversation of those in Sodom (2 Pet. ii. 7.); so I can say for one, that my soul has been vexed and grieved with the filthy conversation, even literally, of some of the head men of our Sodom, and much more with the filthiness contained in their spiritual conversation; but as the Lord knew how to deliver just Lot from the temptations he was in, so he has known how to deliver me completely with a strong hand from the temptation, stumbling, and snare which I was in, and has brought me as completely out of Sodom, as ever he did Lot, and has brought me to as certain a point, that they are all in spiritual adultery, together rejoicing in a false christ, as I am certain that the true Christ is now in my heart, and that I am as sure of, at this moment, as I am sure of standing in this pulpit. And he who has brought me out of Sodom will bring all the rest of his family out in his own good time; and those who are now coming, but at the same time *balting between two opinions*, let them remember Lot's wife. Do not mind what I say, but remember

ber what the Saviour says, and he says, *Remember Lot's wife* (Luke xvii. 32.), who, for looking behind, with one glance of her carnal reason, was turned into a *pillar of salt*, or monument of vindictive wrath and vengeance. Therefore, *he who is upon the house top*, and gets a little view of Sodom by faith, *let him not come down* from his vision, *to take any of the stuff of reason out of his house*; and *he that is in the field*, running for his life, *let him not return back*: for *whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it*, Luke xvii. 31—33. And as soon as Lot escaped out of Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke xvii. 29, 30.); and this fire from heaven is already kindled by the word of God; and, with respect to us, it has burnt up our natural heavens of joy and delight in the flesh; and when once it catches hold of the palaces of Antichrist, it will speedily fulfil Peter's prediction, *wherein the heavens of his happiness, peace and rest, being on fire, shall be dissolved*, even all the natural heavens, under the whole spiritual heavens; and their elements, or provisions of wisdom, strength and worship, doctrines and commandments of men, after the rudiments of this world, *shall melt with fervent heat* from the Holy Ghost. Seeing then that these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all

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holy conversation in the Holy Ghost, and true godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of this day of God, which is at hand; and as ye know this before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11, 12: 17.

The eighth sign—Christ said, *Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh: behold I come as a thief* (Matt. xxiv. 44. Rev. xvi. 15.), that is, suddenly and unexpectedly; on which account, he says, *Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come: but know this, that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up,* Matt. xxiv. 43. If you do not watch and pray, his coming is sure to be the same to you as it was to the Scribes and Pharisees when he came first, and that was as a thief: Elias was promised to be sent to them first, to restore all things; and they were looking for him to be some great man of high estate, that should come and give them honour; but, instead of that, he was John the Baptist, out of an obscure corner of the land, of mean birth and education, and instead of doing them honour, he cut down, and plundered from them all the religion they had; so came on them as a thief and a robber: and the disciples said unto their Lord, *Why say the Scribes that Elias must*
first

first come? and he answered, Elias must first come, and restore all things: but I say unto you, Elias is come already, and they knew him not; and they have done to him as they listed; even so shall the Son of man suffer of this evil generation (Matt. xvii. 10, 11.); for they expect that I am come to sanction their presumption, and reign over it, and them in it, as king; but I come not to send such peace on earth, but rather fire and a sword; and these burned and cut their consciences, until they were plundered of all the peace and rest they had: so he came on them as a thief, and as he came this way at first, so, Paul says, he shall come the same way again. When writing to the Thessalonians, he speaks, But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, who know your darkness, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief, 1 Thess. v. 1—4. But all those who are in darkness, or standing in their own light, it is overtaking them as a thief already; for they know it not, and because it is turning their light and wisdom into darkness, they are calling it a spirit of confusion; and because it despises, and tramples upon their holiness and goodness, it is called

a bad spirit; and because it is breaking, and burning their cords of fleshly love and affection, it is called an austere, harsh spirit of bondage; and because it is overturning their altars, and casts down Dagon on his face, and exposes their idol worship and formal devotion, it is called an Antinomian spirit, and spirit of the Devil. Thus he comes as a thief, and they know him not; and also as a snare shall he come upon all them that dwell on the earth (Luke xxi. 35.), or church; and the snare is this, they can neither tell whether he be from heaven, or of men, more than the Chief Priests and Scribes could tell from whence John's ministry was. If they were to say from heaven, then we would say, *Why then do ye not believe on him?* and if they should say, *of men*, then they fear the people, who have got the testimony that he is from heaven; and also fear their own conscience, for all these hold John as a prophet, Matt. xxi. 25, 26. If they were to justify us, then they must condemn themselves with all the world; if they were to condemn us finally, then they must condemn themselves also; for what they have, we have; what they hold, we hold; every branch of experience they boast of, we may boast of also: *Are they Hebrews? so am I;* *Are they Pharisees? so am I,* as strict a Pharisee as the best of them; *Do they contend for meekness, humility, love, and joy in the flesh? my flesh is as*
full

full of all these as it can hold, *so that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing* (2 Cor. xi. 5.), because there is a spirit in us which counts all these things, whether in us or in them, *drofs and dung*; and this is the spirit of Christ; but him they cannot endure, because he casts down their *rock*, their *refuge*, their God, and that wherein they trust; and this is the principal thing which makes it such an *hour of temptation*. And that the hour of temptation is come, and is about over, even their own language do testify; but it has been, and is, in substance, very different from what they supposed it, namely, to consist of national politics and French principles, which have been the same temptation to the nation at large, as to the church of God; and many hundreds have overcome these, that will never overcome the other; for all true overcomers are to be made *pillars in the temple of God*, Rev. iii. 12. Therefore the substance of the temptation cannot mean any thing national, or respecting the French, for they have never yet set up Anti-christ, to deceive God's elect with a false christ; so far from it, they have cast down every kind of Christ, and every kind of God, and every kind of religion, into blank Atheism; and in their place set up, and deified the Age of Reason: and all this may be typical of what the spirit of Anti-christ has done in this *hour of temptation*. Daniel

speaks concerning him, that, like the French, this king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, until the indignation be accomplished (on the chosen race): for that which is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (or the ancient Popes), nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all, in splendour and appearance; but, in his estate, like the French, he shall honour the God of forces (Dan. xi. 36—38.), or the Age of Reason, or a strong faith standing in reason. And this is the strong temptation which has overspread the church like a flood; and the end shall be with a flood, and with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully (Dan. xi. 22, 23.), until he deceives all them that dwell in the earth, or church, except those few who are left to bear witness, and testify against him; and these few keep the word of Christ's patience, which is their testimony, by which they overcome; and because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth, Rev. iii. 10. This flood of reason you now see in the church, and all carried away with it, except a few

few faithful witnesses, that testify against it. Then that which follows immediately upon this is, *Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* And you have the promise following, *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.* And, further, he speaks for our comfort, *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee,* Rev. iii. 9—12. Now, from what has been said respecting the coming of this great and dreadful day of the Lord, I shall draw up the conclusion in a few particulars. And, *first*, From the almost continual darkness and affliction which I have been in for two years past, I believe the *midnight* to be over, and the *midnight cry* to have already gone. And, *secondly*, From the unusual, uncommon, and wonderful light which I have had for these two or three weeks past, I believe the morning is drawing on, and the day beginning to dawn on the walls of poor Zion. And *thirdly*, From the monstrous scenes of spiritual wickedness I see in myself by the Lord's light; and

and, in the same, view the whole church of God, a few only excepted, lying asleep, in the darkness of midnight, as black as blackness itself, whilst they think themselves in the light and day. This makes me believe that the *destruction* of the city, with the horror of darkness and night, is ready to fall on them. And, *fourthly*, I am confident that it is in the Lord's own light that I see, because the Devil has been constantly working up the plague of pride and every abomination, for to make it withdraw, and I have joined him with my own will, and yet all could not veil it over; so I have found it true, that, as we cannot command the light to shine, no more can we command it to depart; but, like the sun in the firmament, it has remained shining, with very little variation, particularly this last week; and this morning, when meditating on these words, *the elements shall melt with fervent heat*, there was such a blaze of light fell on them, that I could compare to nothing but being in the sun; and the *Sun of Righteousness* will most assuredly, in a little time, set all the elements of this world in a blaze. And Christ's parable seems now about fulfilling—*Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise, when ye shall see these things (or signs), come to pass, know that (this glorious) summer is near, even at the doors.*

doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word concerning it shall never pass away, Matt. xxiv. 32—35.

I come now to the *second* general head, which is to shew who *Elijah* is; and here I would not have you to suppose that I hint, or arrogate any thing to myself but what God has given me, as if I made myself *Elijah*: no such thing; but this I am sure of, that God has given me *the spirit of Elijah*; and wherever his spirit is, whether in preacher or hearer, there is *Elijah the prophet*. Now this can give you no offence, by setting one man in pre-eminence above another, and there is *no respect of persons with God*. But it remains now to shew what the spirit of *Elijah* is; and in order to shew this, I believe, it consists chiefly of these four things:

First, A spirit of judgment and discernment.

Secondly, A spirit of indignation against the flesh, and zeal for God.

Thirdly, A spirit of power.

Fourthly, A spirit of prayer.

First, It is a spirit of judgment and discernment, like that which John the Baptist had, when he laid the *axe* of the law to the *root* of the heart, judging, discovering, and discerning the works of the law to be in the heart; and these consist chiefly of a self-justifying, self-seeking, self-exalting

self-exalting, consequential, and hypocritical spirit. Where these are seen, judged, and condemned, there is the spirit of judgment; and it was with this spirit that Elijah judged and condemned all *the priests of Baal*, and all the worshippers of *Baal* in his day.

Secondly, It is a spirit of anger and indignation, with and against the flesh, and zeal for God; and where the first of these is, there is the second also: but the second may be where the first is not. Jehu had a wonderful zeal for God, so as to destroy all the idolatry of the land; but then he says to Jehonadab, *Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord* (2 Kings x. 16.); which shews that he had no indignation against the source of that fleshly speech. Saul had a wonderful zeal for God when *he destroyed all the witches of the land*; but he went to one afterwards himself, which shewed that he had no zeal against witchcraft, nor against himself; for consulting with it, Paul, in his Pharisaic state, was exceeding zealous for God, so as to *persecute the saints, even to strange cities*, because they were enemies to his religion; but he had no indignation against his Pharisaic spirit. The Jews every one of them had a *zeal for God*, but not according to knowledge: for they *being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God* (Rom. x. 3.); which

which shews that they had no indignation against their own nor themselves for holding it. But if you or I feel the working of self-righteousness, and cannot get from it, yet hate and abhor it, there is a true *zeal for God*. If I feel the motions of pride working to get the honour and esteem of men and God, and, at the same time, feel a hatred, indignation, and detestation against it, and myself for it, there is a burning, fiery *zeal for God*, which is the *sword*, that will *beu in pieces before the Lord* all the men-pleasers, flesh or swine-feeders, delicate *Agags*, and all the children of *Amalek* now in the world; the same as *Elijah*, at the *brook Kishon*, slew all the priests and prophets of *Baal* with the sword, and *let not one of them escape*, 1 Kings xviii, 40.

Thirdly, It is a spirit of *power*, called the *spirit and power of Elias*, which was shewn by the miracles he wrought, such as raising up the dead to life (1 Kings xvii. 22.); multiplying the widow's oil and meal (1 Kings xvii. 14.), feeding himself for some time with bread from heaven by means of a raven (1 Kings xvii. 6.); and these miracles are still done to this day. When I see myself *black* with all kinds of abominable wickedness, and no clean part about me, or good thing within me, because every good thing is turned into sin; but, at the same time, have this conviction, that, what I now see and feel, must be by the Spirit's *light and power*; and from
 this

this *comfort* should spring up. It would not then be rejoicing because of any good thing discovered in me, but rather that I discovered myself to be a sinner; and as it is the Spirit that does that, it is rejoicing in spirit, or faith rejoicing in the *knowledge of sin*; and faith then is Elijah's raven, feeding his soul with *bread from heaven*, which is a greater work and miracle, humanly speaking, than it was to make the world, for then God commanded all things into existence out of nothing; but here the very essence, likeness, and image of the Devil is turned into *angel's food*, whilst he is resisting it with all his might, to turn it into poison. So the miracle is no less than turning the *Devil* into *God*, *sin* into *holiness*, *death* into *life*, *weakness* into *strength*; and this is the *spirit and power of Elijah*, Luke i. 17.

Fourthly, It is a spirit of prayer; and the Apostle James sets forth Elijah as an example in prayer, saying, *He was a man subject to like passions with ourselves; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months* (James v. 17.); during which time, Elijah told the Church, that they should neither have *dew nor rain* from the Lord, but according to his word, 1 Kings xvii. 1. And that which gave him this confidence and boldness was, because he saw the greatest part of God's children, at that time, led
away

away into idolatry by means of Baal's priests; and as he hated it, he hated them for it, and prayed, and interceded against them all—*Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias, how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have broken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, killed thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left alone, and they seek my life, Rom. xi. 2, 3.* God heard his prayers, and shut up heaven, that there was no dew nor rain, until he prayed again for rain, and God sent rain upon the earth, *1 Kings xviii. 45.* This is the work which I have been at for some time, namely, praying against Israel; because I see the greatest part of them led away, and standing in *idolatry*. And when a man prays against *idolatry*, whether in himself or others, it must be from a right spirit; and from the freedom, familiarity, confidence, and boldness which I have found with God, and sorrow for their sin, and assurance of my own cause being God's, I believe he has heard me, and does hear me, and that they shall not have one drop of real dew, or rain, from him, as long as they stand where they do; for it is written concerning the witnesses, that *they have power to stop heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, Rev. xi. 6.* But, further, that which proves a spirit of prayer is, when it prays against all other kinds of prayer, if I see the prayers of my flesh to be an abomination in the sight of

God, and that I am held fast by them, and cannot get from them, but pray against them, that must be the spirit of prayer. Then if others are pleased with, and contend for, those very prayers which I feel to be an abomination, and which I pray against, then I am not afraid to pray against those persons, because I then know that they are worshipping and praying unto the Devil; therefore can boldly challenge them, as Elijah did, to take a *bullock*, or sacrifice of prayer, and *dress it* in any way they please, but to *put no strange fire under it*; and I will take *another bullock*, and dress it which way I please, *let them call upon their god, and I will call upon my God, and the God that answers by fire, let him be God*. And as they are watching for my halting, and have sent many predictions abroad, that God will expose, and strip me naked and bare, and stop my mouth before a twelvemonth be over, they must call earnestly upon their God, to fulfil their predictions, lest the time should expire, and we, like *Elijah*, begin to mock, saying, *Cry louder, for if he be God, either he is talking, or is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or, peradventure, he sleepeth, and must needs be awaked*, 1 Kings xviii. 27. And if he is not awaked before a twelvemonth be over, the Lord hath not spoken by these prophets, for *if the thing come not to pass, the Lord hath not said it, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him*, Duet. xviii. 22. Nor can

can there be any real danger feared, or dreaded, from those who are contending for their own honour; for they that honour themselves God will despise, but *they that honour him, he will honour*, as he did Elijah, who sought for nothing but the destruction of every idol, and the glory, honour, and majesty of the true God; and as that is what we seek, I can go to him at times, in the fullest assurance of faith, like Elijah, saying, *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, let it be known this day, thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God; and that thou hast turned their heart back again*, 1 Kings xviii. 36, 37. And as the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed his sacrifice, so it has, time after time, consumed mine, and by and by, all the people shall see it—and when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and they said, *the Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God*, 1 Kings xviii. 39.

I come now to treat a little on the third general head, which is to shew what the office of Elijah is, or what he comes to do, and the text says, *To turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*; or, in other words, to separate the righteous from the wicked, and make a true distinction between the children of the Devil and the children of God.

First,

First, Like John the Baptist, he lays the line of true judgment to the heart, to discover who is on the Devil's side. And when the cockatrice egg was crushed in the Pharisee, the viper came out and was discovered; and then when John called them a *generation of vipers*, their hearts boiled like a pot with malice and enmity against the truth, and against him for being a messenger of truth. Then, though they called themselves children of God, this proved them to be the children of the Devil; for *they that are of God bear God's word, but ye hear it not, because ye are not of God; for now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which truth I have heard of God: therefore, if God were your father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me* (John viii. 42.); and *which of you convinceth me of sin* (John viii. 46.); or that he has not sent me. Then if he has sent me, and I speak his truth by his spirit, and you hear it not, but boil with madness against it, you are not of God, but of *your own father the Devil, and his works ye will do* (John viii. 44.), and to him your heart is turned, and there is not the least doubt but that he will turn to you with all his legions, and equip, and furnish with matter, support, strengthen, and nurse presumption in you to the last, for *he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, as well as the hearts of the children to their fathers*. But, on the other hand,

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John turned many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And how did he do that? By preaching unto them the *baptism of repentance*, to turn their hearts from dead works. This baptism is by plunging the soul into Jordan, or the law; and, when the waters of affliction from the law run into the soul, it fills it full of all kinds of fears and terrors, griefs and sorrows, anguish of mind, with perplexity, darkness, blindness, and confusion; and these stir up, and set all the faculties of nature to work, saying, *Master, what shall we do?* and, *Master, what must we do?* and the Spirit of life discovers this language and doing to be wrong, and to be only dead works, brought forth by a killing letter unto a killing husband, and profitable for nothing, but wasting the strength of the heart; then, on this discovery, the Spirit turns from them with inward disgust, and turns to God, calling on him by faith and prayer alone. This is called *the doctrine and baptism of repentance from dead works* (Heb. vi. 1, 2.), and calling on God; and as the heart thus turns to God, it turns, at the same time, to the promises made in the new covenant, which covenant was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so as the heart turns to these fathers, these fathers, at the same time, turn to the heart with all their testimonies, blessings, and acknowledgments of their own children in the faith. But still, in the office of Elijah, there is something

something more close than all this. In every child of God there are two distinct bodies; a *spiritual body*, and a *natural body*; and these two bodies are like two mothers, and may be called *Sarah* and *Hagar*. *Hagar* has many children, called the *fruits of the flesh*, because she has many husbands, and they are many fathers, and may be traced up all the way to Adam, and from him to the Devil. *Sarah* has many children, which are *fruits of the Spirit*, because she has many husbands, and they are many fathers, but they all run in the line of the promised seed, and may be traced up to God. Now the great matter is, when *Hagar* brings forth a child, and *Sarah* brings forth another, to make the proper distinction between these children, and turn each child to his proper and respective father. This is the great work of *Elijah*; but how does he accomplish it? In this way; whenever any motion, or sensation, arises in the heart, it is like a child coming from the birth; then he asks it these questions, From whence come ye? and, Whither do ye go? Then, for instance, suppose a strong motion of pride arises, from some good quality we see in us, or about us; then he asks it, From whence do you come? and, Whither do you go? Well, it must confess I come from *Moses* and *Adam*, for they only allow of boasting; and I go to Court to shew myself, get the honour of men, and please the Devil: then you come from, and

go to, your father the Devil—turn ye, and go, get ye to your father. Now then, here must be another motion springing up of a contrary nature, which says to Pride, Go, get ye to your father. Then, From whence come you? and, Whither do you go? To which, it must also confess, I come from something that *denies self*. Then what is that—the *grace of God teaches men to deny all ungodliness*. Then from whence does it come? from the spirit of God, for it is a fruit of the Spirit: then you are a child of God; get you to your Father. But Hagar brings forth another blustering child, in imitation of this one, saying, Yes, I will get me to my Father, God. How? By humbling myself for my pride. But then, From whence does your humility spring? and, Whither does it go? Why, it comes from my own works, and goes to appear with an humble face before men. Then that is pride, and the very spawn and offspring of Satan. Turn ye, and get ye to him, for he is your father. Then, let thought be as quick as lightning, from whence comes that principle, which bids *voluntary humility* go to the Devil, because it is pride? Why, it must come from real *humility*, and that is the real fruit of the Spirit: then get you to your Father, for you are a child of God. Here in this way you may spend days, weeks, and months in making the separation between Hagar's children and those of Sarah, and turning each to his pro-

per father. And if you were to watch, there is not a motion, or sensation, that comes from the flesh, but what you may trace it up to the Devil, and there you ought to leave it, and not give way to despondency concerning it, nor cast away your confidence, let the Devil have his due, but ask yourself this question, By what is it that I see and feel this fruit belongs to the Devil? Why, it must be by something that convinces me it is sin. Then what is that something? Why, it is *the spirit that convinces of sin*; then I must have got the Spirit. Well, so you have: turn unto him; and, in turning to him, you turn to God. And as the flesh turns continually another way, he becomes a *cross* to it; and, by this cross, all causes and pleas in the heart are tried; and it contains all the *treasures of wisdom and power*, to separate the offspring of earth and hell from all the offspring of God and Heaven; and it tramples and abases all the first to hell from whence they came, whilst it raises up, and exalts all the others to God's right hand; and this must be done, *lest God come and smite the earth with a curse*, which brings me to the last head contained in the text.

The earth here, in a particular sense, means the heart, which is God's ground; and *he smites it with the rod of his mouth*, which is the *chastening word of his law*, as a ministration of *death and condemnation*; and that tends to fix the *cross* we before spoke of, which makes a true separation be-

tween the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. But if that separation be not made, both seem joined together, and the heart, or *earth*, is nothing but a scene of wild confusion; and all the corruptions, filthiness, and sins in it are under the impending *curse* of God, being under the law; so that the person can never come to any true judgment of his state, nor be free from fears of the threatened curse upon all manner of transgression. But Elijah comes to discover what is the Spirit of God in the earth, and brings it out, and turns him to the Lord his God, *lest he should come, or that he may not come and smite the earth with a curse*; and the reason is, because *Christ was made a curse for it*, that the Spirit in it *might inherit a blessing*; and *was made under the law, that it might be redeemed from under the law*, turn unto God, and receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying unto him, *Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 5, 6. And now, if there were not a *very small remnant* thus turned in spirit, to know the Lord their God, we might expect that he would come and *smite the whole professed church with a curse*; except the Lord of hosts had left us a *very small remnant*, we should have been like unto Sodom and Gomorrha, Isa. i. 9. But God has never left himself without a witness since the world began; nor has he left himself without some to testify for him against the dreadful apostacy, idolatry, and delusion

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which

which now reigns, and covers the greatest part of the whole church, keeping them in midnight darkness. *But, behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of that great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

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Printed by F. Jollie, Carlisle.—1800.